

ANALYSIS / OPINION

'Move Ahead or Fall Behind', Urges Congressman Ed Royce

By **REP. ED ROYCE**
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One President, five Cabinet Members, and too many other U.S. officials to count have visited India during the first years of the Obama Administration. And there was the state visit by Prime Minister Singh in November 2009. Last week, I met with Indian parliamentarians visiting Washington. No doubt, U.S. and Indian officials have had plenty of face time.

Next up is the second U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue. Secretary Clinton will depart on July 19th for New Delhi, packing a heavy suitcase of unfinished business. "Maintaining the momentum" is the goal, according to former Indian ambassador to the U.S. Ronen Sen. I view it more as resuscitating a critical relationship, a relationship that had been growing since I accompanied President Clinton to India, and further intensified under President Bush.

True, we have seen economic cooperation rise to unprecedented levels, with two-way trade reaching a record high of \$50 billion last year. The first four months of this year are setting a record pace, 15 percent above the same period last year. Yet India's Commerce Minister describes the situation between the two countries as "way below their potential." He's right. What's more frustrating is knowing that trade is being limited by impediments which both nations could correct. These are self-inflicted wounds.

On our end, the U.S. should dump its antiquated agricultural subsidy policy, which has been cited in World Trade Organization meetings as harmful to farmers globally, particularly in India. With 600 million citizens dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood, India's frustration with U.S. farm policy is quite understandable. These policies are also burdensome to the U.S. treasury and American consumers. Current budget negotiations in the United States have put these payments on the chopping block. I hope to see them go.

Market access is another barrier holding back our economic relationship — and India's economic growth. Take solar energy and India's production goals of adding 20,000 megawatts to the grid by 2020. Those efforts are hampered by India's current regulatory



File photo of President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at a reception in honor of Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna (center) of India at the State Department on June 3, 2010 in Washington, D.C. Rep. Ed Royce writes this piece in advance of the upcoming U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue set to take place July 19 in New Delhi. (Getty Images)

policy barring the importation of solar panel technology.

India has developed many impressive technologies and industries. But no nation is an island these days. Without outside assistance, including from the U.S. solar industry, India will needlessly struggle developing viable new energy sources. India could benefit by opening many of its other markets — financial services and retail services — to U.S. goods and services. Only then will the trade relationship reach its potential.

Then there is our strategic and defense relationship. Pakistan's continued unraveling and China's aggressiveness is a great cause of concern that requires India to play a decisive role for regional stability. Security cooperation with the U.S. complements this crucial role.

A key component of defense cooperation is the harmonization of weapon systems, which improves combined combat operations and training coordination. In this regard, India's Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft decision was a step backward. That makes it imperative to build on the recent announcement of C-17 military transport aircraft sales to India. Counterterrorism cooperation and information sharing also must improve. The strategic dialogue should acknowledge the centrality of U.S.-India security cooperation in India's increasingly challenging region.

The U.S. and India share not only a democratic commitment, but face similar threats

to their democracies. As Chair of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, I'm fully aware of the ever present terrorism threat and the spread of extremist ideology in the region. The strategic dialogue reaffirms our commitment to the safety of not only Indians, but Americans as well.

India is rightly concerned about Pakistan. I have been a leading congressional voice calling for a fundamental reexamination of the U.S. relationship with Islamabad. U.S. policy toward Pakistan is broken. India should play a bigger role in that redirection.

India is a democracy of over a billion people. Its economy is growing fast. Its military is rapidly modernizing. The U.S. and India have been branded "natural allies." Over the past decade, U.S. and Indian policy makers have been working hard to build a solid relationship, to benefit both sides. However, to be honest, the relationship has hit a lull. That must be corrected. A strong U.S.-India relationship must be a pillar of our strategy in Asia. And in the world, you move ahead or fall behind.

At a time of great economic and security challenges around the world, our two great democracies should be leading, with all of the difficult work it entails. Until that happens, I won't be satisfied.

(Rep. Ed Royce, R-Calif., is co-chairman of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans.)